

Synergy helps Salford to integrate, collaborate and consolidate to enhance public protection

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Councillor David Lancaster
Salford City Council



By upgrading its surveillance solution with Synectics' Synergy platform, Salford City Council has been able to introduce important new crime fighting camera technology, while also boosting incident and evidence management capabilities to better support and partner with the police in making the city a safer place to live.

Building on surveillance success

Salford is a city in Greater Manchester with a population of around 220,000 people and, like many other urban local authorities, is affected by a range of issues, from vehicle theft and fly-tipping (illegal dumping of waste) to anti-social behavior, violent incidents, and organized crime. The council's CCTV team plays a crucial role in helping to tackle these problems.

“Ultimately, we want to make Salford a safer place to live, work, and visit,” said Councillor David Lancaster, lead member for environment and community safety

for Salford City Council, “which means we are always looking for ways to improve and adapt the resources we have to achieve that goal.”

From its central control room in Swinton, Salford City Council's CCTV team monitors 120 cameras located across the city, 24 hours a day. Councillor Lancaster continued: “Proactively monitoring activity, and being able to help the police to respond to incidents as efficiently as possible, is a challenge in such a busy city. You simply have to have the right control system in place to prioritize public safety.

“For us, Synectics' Synergy platform was that system. Since implementing it in 2009 we had always found it easy to use and we'd never have any outage problems at all. So when we learned about the enhanced capabilities offered by Synergy, particularly in relation to third-party integration and evidence management, we could immediately see opportunities for improving public service, while also continuing with a solution we knew very well and trusted. In 2015 we made the decision to upgrade and haven't looked back.”

Managing the evidence life cycle

Salford City Council's CCTV team works closely with the police to detect, tackle, and help prevent crime. Handling requests for footage review, tracking live incidents, and safeguarding evidential data for investigative and prosecution purposes are part of daily life.

For Salford City Council it is also one of the key areas where Synergy has delivered significant benefits. Councillor Lancaster explained: "The incident and evidence management tools within Synergy allow us to efficiently capture, secure, store, and share video footage with our police colleagues, ensuring that data integrity is maintained throughout."

On spotting any suspicious, criminal, or anti-social activity, operatives in Salford's control room can immediately trigger an incident management process in Synergy that logs all video footage, associated data, and system activity in a temporary repository where it is SHA-2 encrypted and transferred to a secure evidence locker.

During and after an incident operators can also add notes to the footage stored, which, should the incident span multiple shifts, ensures continuity between members of the surveillance team.

Crucially, improvements within Synergy and its associated hardware enable evidence held in the locker to be securely accessed, viewed, and uploaded by authorized police officers in under an hour – a process that would previously have taken several shifts to complete – saving both the council and police valuable time.

Collaborating with on-the-ground officers

Synergy also supports collaborative working with the police by enabling better audio and visual communication with officers operating across the city.

An integral two-way radio system ensures that potential threats and incidents are communicated quickly, ensuring that officers can be directed to – and updated on – events based on real-time intelligence, supporting rapid response.

The system upgrade also means Salford is now benefiting from multi-view capabilities – with operatives tracking up to 16 cameras on a single monitor in order to better manage incidents, gather evidence, and respond to visual verification requests from officers on the ground. Additionally, using 'Follow Me' functionality within Synergy, the council CCTV team can permit authorized officers to log in and view live camera feeds remotely.

Making HD camera integration easy and effective

As an open-architecture solution, Synergy is compatible with a wide range of third-party security, enterprise, and data management systems.

At Salford, the ability to integrate third-party video has enabled the council to integrate its full range of legacy analog and IP cameras with third-party HD IP cameras that provide full-color surveillance in low-light conditions. The council will also be able to easily



introduce newer technologies, such as 4K cameras, as budget and needs dictate.

The result of Salford's improved HD capability is that crimes taking place under the cover of darkness that were previously difficult to detect – drug dealing, car theft, or burglary – are now visible and tracked. In one incident, a suspect was apprehended after night-time surveillance footage showed them checking the front doors of numerous houses on a single street to see if they were unlocked.

“Having the ability to capture high-quality evidential footage of this nature means the police can often now secure pre-trial guilty pleas,” noted Councillor Lancaster.

Another major benefit of the council's improved HD capability is that cameras can zoom into vehicle registration plates at a far greater distance, helping police to track suspects using number plate recognition. This has had a major impact on tackling the issue of fly-tipping, with 45 offenders identified since 2014. The image quality improvements also help with efforts to locate missing people by providing clearer facial details.

Driving operational efficiencies and generating income

Synectics' hardware implemented as part of the upgrade has also helped the



council deliver on cost and energy efficiency targets. For example, their new Synectics servers have reduced power consumption by almost half. On a five-year life cycle, the reduced energy and cooling requirements equate to £7,000 in savings, as well as a significant decrease in rack space.

Meanwhile, the quality and reliability of Salford's enhanced solution have been an important factor in the council's ability to sell its surveillance services to parties such as schools, businesses, and private entities – effectively turning a financial outlay into a potential source of income generation.

As part of efforts to attract customers, the council secured the British Standard 7958 for CCTV management and operation from SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board). A key requirement for the standard is being able to justify the need for each camera monitored – justification Salford has easily demonstrated through using Synergy's extensive and intuitive reporting capabilities.

To date, Salford is one of only a handful of public authority organizations to hold this certification.

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PROJECT DETAILS

Client

Salford City Council

Location

Salford, UK

For further information on the products, services, and systems offered by Synectics, visit synecticsglobal.com.

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Facilitating future efficiency and crime-fighting capability

It is not just Salford's CCTV team that have been impressed by the solution. Plans are now in place for Trafford Council's CCTV team to move into Salford's control room, the aim being for the councils to share resources and expertise as they work to tackle crime in their respective cities.

"If our control room hadn't had a resilient and dependable system in place, Trafford wouldn't have even considered the move," noted Councillor Lancaster. "Our approach to surveillance and how we use Synergy means we are catching more criminals and securing high arrest rates, all of which allows us to make significant inroads into the overall reduction of crime and disorder, making Salford a safer place to live, work, and visit."

Customer view

"The reliability and usability of Synergy, together with its open architecture and ability to integrate with the latest camera technology, ensure Salford is setting the standard for public surveillance in the North West," said Councillor David Lancaster, lead member for environment and community safety for Salford City Council.

Synectics designs integrated end-to-end surveillance control systems for the world's most demanding security environments. We excel at complex projects that require innovative, tailored solutions with high reliability and flexibility, specifically for casinos, oil and gas, marine, public space, banking, transport and critical infrastructure applications. Synectics' Systems division is part of Synectics plc, a global leader in advanced surveillance, security and integration technologies and services.

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